

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



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SUBJECT: Field Training Program		
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I. POLICY:

Newly hired recruit officers shall not be placed into a full-time position by themselves until they have successfully completed the Field Training Program. The goal of the St. Joseph Police Department's Field Training Program is to produce fully trained, competent and qualified police officers. The Field Training Program, commonly referred to as the FTO Program, is designed as a transition from academy training to initial exposure to law enforcement duties. The Field Training Program, in accordance with the Field Training Manual, will provide new officers with practical field training and personal instruction. It will also evaluate their performance in order to determine remedial training needs and assess fitness for continued employment beyond the probationary period.

II. DEFINITIONS:

(See also Department General Order on Additional Duty/Specialized Assignments)

- A. Field Training Officer:** Commonly referred to as "FTO" is that member who directly trains, supervises, and evaluates new officers going through the Field Training Program.
- B. Field Training Commander:** Commonly referred to as the FTO Commander is the Captain who coordinates/supervises the overall activities of the members involved in the Field Training Program.
- C. Field Training Sergeants:** Commonly referred to as the FTO Sergeants, are those Sergeants who have been designated to assist in scheduling FTO meetings, training, and/or counseling sessions. There shall be one FTO Sergeant on each of the three Patrol shifts. When absent the FTO Commander will designate one FTO Sergeant as acting FTO Commander. They will assume the responsibility and authority of the FTO Program in the absence of the FTO Commander.
- D. Recruit Officer:** A newly hired officer who is:
 - 1. Currently undergoing academy training for a Missouri P.O.S.T. certificate. Or,

2. Has completed academy training and has not been employed by another law enforcement agency. And,
 3. Has not completed the St. Joseph Police Department's Field Training Program.
- E. Lateral Officer:** A newly hired MO P.O.S.T. certified officer with at least one year of police patrol experience with an outside law enforcement agency.
- F. Officer Trainee:** any Lateral Officer or Recruit Officer currently in the Field Training Program.

III. PROCEDURE:

A. Initial Law Enforcement Academy Training:

1. Recruit officers shall successfully graduate from a certified Missouri law enforcement academy prior to engaging in law enforcement duties.
2. The Department requires that the curriculum provided to future recruits be based upon the following:
 - a. Tasks of the most frequent assignments associated with new police officers that complete basic academy training; and
 - b. Missouri Peace Officers Standards and Training Program (P.O.S.T.) requirements for peace officer certification.
3. The Department Training Officer shall serve as the liaison between the Department and the law enforcement academy.
4. Recruits will be evaluated in the academy by a variety of means to measure their competency of basic skills, knowledge, and abilities that are required in order to graduate from the same. These evaluations may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Written exams;
 - b. Practical exams;
 - c. Role playing exercises; and
 - d. Situational exercises.
5. After completion of an academy, the police Training Officer will be responsible for scheduling recruit training in city orientation, department policy and procedures, firearms qualifications, and other programs normally provided prior to completion of the FTO program.

B. Field Training Program Description:

1. The program will consist of several rotations in which officer trainees are assigned to different Field Training Officers. This will assist recruits by broadening their experience and exposure to a variety of shifts, areas, and individual Field Training Officers.
2. Field Training Officers will evaluate trainee performance on a daily basis, using both the Daily Observation Form and the Standard Evaluation Guidelines. The recruit is evaluated on the various required job skills to be learned, according to the standardized, task specific criteria outlined in the FTO Program. A Department training day does not count as an evaluation day. A designated number of Daily Observation Reports **must** be obtained by the recruit during each phase of the program.

3. Recruit officers will be required to successfully complete written exams administered within the program.
4. A minimum acceptable level of performance is necessary before the recruit officer advances to the next phase of the program.
5. The FTO program is scheduled for 14 weeks, consisting of the following stages:
 - a. Phase I: 4 weeks in length;
 - b. Phase II: 4 weeks in length;
 - c. Phase III: 4 weeks in length; and
 - d. Phase IV: 2 weeks in length.
6. Lateral Officers may qualify for a “Fast Track” option of the St. Joseph Police Department’s Field Training Program.
7. Lateral Officers must complete an assessment phase that includes the in-house training with The Support Services Division and a one-week assessment with a Field Training Officer. Once the assessment is completed a written recommendation of “Fast Track” shall be completed by Support Service Training Sergeant, the Field Training Officer, and the FTO Sergeant. Only if all three recommendations are completed should a recruit be enrolled in the “Fast Track” option.
8. Fast Track will consist of three phases:
 - a. Phase I: 4 weeks in length, the first week of which will be an assessment and acceptance in the Fast Track option. The final three weeks of Phase I will be utilized to complete as much of the Field Training Task List as possible.
 - b. Phase II: 3 weeks in duration. Will include completion of the Task List (100% discussed, 80% accomplished).
 - c. Phase III: 1 week in duration. An assigned FTO will ride with the trainee and assess their knowledge, skills and abilities (similar to traditional Phase IV).
 - d. Upon recommendation of the Field Training Officer, the Field Training Sergeant, The Field Training Commander and the Patrol Division Commander, the Fast Track Trainee may be released from the Field Training Program and assume the duties of a Patrol Officer within the Patrol Division.
9. If a Trainee is not accepted in Fast Track, the full FTO program of 14 weeks shall be completed.
10. The Field Training Program may be further modified to expedite Field Training for those Trainees who are hired with at least 4 years of verified patrol experience with a Law Enforcement Agency
11. A period of Remedial Training may be scheduled in addition to the standard 14-week time period, when applicable. The maximum amount of time in which a recruit can spend in the FTO program is 16 weeks, unless extenuating circumstances exist. A period of training with the Traffic and/or Detective Division may also be scheduled in addition to the standard duration, when applicable.

C. Field Training Officer Selection:

1. A notice of opening(s) as a Field Training Officer shall be posted within the Department for 10 days. Information regarding the selection process will be placed on the position announcement. The number of Field Training Officers appointed as such will be based on hiring projections.

2. Interested officers must submit a memorandum of interest to the FTO Commander, requesting consideration and stating their qualifications.
3. The FTO Commander or their designate will review requests and set up interviews. The FTO Commander will direct the Interview Board, which should, at a minimum, consist of one FTO Sergeant and two Field Training Officers.
4. To be eligible for the position, members must meet the following conditions:
 - a. Officers must have three (3) years of continuous service with the Department.
 - b. Officers must have demonstrated superior performance. An assessment of the candidate's last evaluation/ratings period will be conducted.
 - c. There must be no history of **serious** substantiated Internal Affairs Complaint(s) within the last evaluation/ratings period (i.e. written reprimand, suspension-See also General Order governing Disciplinary Action).
 - d. Officers must have the desire to train others. An assessment of the candidate's qualifications for individualized training, coaching, and evaluating new officers will be conducted.
 - e. Officers must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
5. A candidate's immediate Supervisor(s) will be contacted concerning their positive/negative qualities related to serving as a Field Training Officer.

D. Training:

1. Initial Training may be provided to newly appointed Field Training Officers by the Field Training Commander and/or Field Training Sergeants/Supervisor(s).
2. New Field Training Officers will be provided outside training in applicable areas (i.e. adult learning, training techniques, etc.).
3. Periodic in-service training will be provided to Field Training Officers in those areas where current training is desirable and/or necessary.

E. Supervision of Police Recruits:

1. Police Recruits SHALL consider their Field Training Officer as their immediate Supervisor and SHALL obey all lawful orders from the same. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
2. The formal Chain-of-Command for Officer Trainees while **actively TRAINING IN THE FIELD** is as follows (from lowest level to highest level):
 - a. Officer Trainee
 - b. Field Training Officer;
 - c. **In the absence of the FTO**, Other Patrol Officer, Traffic Officer, and/or Detective;
 - d. Patrol Supervisor, Traffic Supervisor, and/or Detective Supervisor;
 - e. Watch Commander(s);
 - f. Division Commander(s); and
 - g. Chief of Police.

3. When a training/supervising problem develops requiring a counseling session **within** the FTO Program, the FTO shall contact the FTO Sergeant on their shift and/or FTO Commander, requesting their presence. Such sessions SHALL be documented. Similar counseling sessions **outside** the FTO Program requiring immediate attention that involves a trainee, their Field Training Officer, and a Shift Supervisor SHALL be documented. The FTO Sergeants and/or FTO Commander shall be informed of all such counseling sessions and be provided with a written report of the same.

F. Supervision of Field Training Officers:

1. Field Training Officers are under the immediate supervision of their Shift Supervisors.
2. Shift Supervisors will inform the appropriate FTO Supervisor and/or FTO Commander of any problem(s) concerning the observed performance of a particular Field Training Officer.
3. A Field Training Officer may be relieved of the assignment for good cause under the authority of the Chief of Police.

G. Responsibilities of Field Training Officers:

1. Field Training Officers are responsible for the supervision and evaluation of assigned officer trainees. Additional duties include:
 - a. Counseling trainees on their job performance, including reinforcement and documentation of good performance.
 - b. Identifying and communicating to the FTO Sergeants and/or FTO Commander concerning problems with the trainee's job performance;
 - c. Making recommendations for remedial training and documenting all such efforts;
 - d. Utilizing curricula outlined in the FTO Program's Task/Performance Chart;
 - e. Participating in meetings scheduled by the FTO Sergeants /FTO Commander;
 - f. Meeting all reporting responsibilities that include completion of the Daily Observation Report(s) and End of Phase Report(s). Daily reports should be completed prior to the end of the FTO's duty shift. The FTO will meet with their trainee prior to the end of shift and explain the ratings for that shift to the trainee;
 - g. Writing a final memorandum to the FTO Sergeants/FTO Commander recommending retention or termination of the trainee. Any FTO recommendation on the same MUST be supported by thorough documentation in the Daily Observation Report(s) and Remedial Training Efforts; and
 - h. Remaining fair and objective in the ratings of their trainees.

Chris Connally, Chief of Police

Date